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783 elders. The men-folk are shaved and, thereafter,
765 both men and women repair to the *jòl-ghat* (public bath). Coming back, two men again impersonate
[782] *Maraṅ Buru* and the deceased, and are offered
[769] *bàṇḍiaràsi* (the best part of rice-beer); fowls and goats are sacrificed in their honour in the yard. A meal is prepared with rice and offered inside the house, while the villagers are plied with rice-beer and treated to a feast. The meat of the sacrificed animal is divided in a peculiar way, the villagers being entitled to the upper side when it was felled on the ground, the lower falling to the share of him who provided it.

The ceremonies conclude at Mayurbhanj with *Kandh Bhojani*, when some Santals, impersonating Brahmins and Vaishnavs, are fed by the family, and *Bhandar Bodh*, which requires a barber, similarly acting his part, to be presented with rice and meat showing undoubted influences of Hinduism.

IDEAS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

795
772 At this stage, we think it will be instructive to give the reader some idea about the Santal's belief in a life hereafter.

The Heaven (*Serma disom*, lit. sky-country) is situated up in the blue skies. It is also called
[776] *Svòròg*. There the gods, *Maraṅ Buru* (the Chief Presiding Deity) and others live. At times they also

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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come down to earth. When after a man's death, his *jaṅ baba* (bones) are thrown into the sacred river, Damodar, his *mul* (shadow, soul) goes up to *Serma disom* or *Svòrȍg* (Heaven). There it is that the virtuous ones remain, enjoying heavenly bliss along with the gods themselves.

Those who were sinners on the earth, are consigned to *Nòrȍk* (Hell). It is a very painful place where big worms feed perpetually on those thus punished, and a variety of other tortures are also provided (e. g. they may be ordered to unweave the knots of a net). *Nòrȍk* (Hell) is the abode of *Iòm Raja* (King of Death), who takes away the sinners from the earth and imprisons them there. The men and women, who go there, without their cicatrization and tattoo-marks respectively, are made to sit with their hands outspread, and they are then made to embrace (*hòbòr*) huge drum-sized worms, by the regents of the nether-world. When these worms move, the prisoners undergo painful torture.

As regards the period of such punishment and re-birth on earth for those who are consigned to Hell, some believe that they are born again as beasts and birds on the earth. But if their sin is washed away completely, they can have re-birth as men. Others are disposed to believe that the sinners never come back to earth as men, but only as birds and beasts.